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MORRIS GRAY
CLASS OF 1877

OLD GAMUL.

A LYRIC PLAY.

OLD GAMUL

A LYRIC PLAY

BY

THOMAS NEWBIGGING

LONDON:

T. FISHER UNWIN,

PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1892.

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Nov 19, 1931

INTRODUCTION.



THE Story of Old Gamul is one that my "honoured Grannie" used to relate to amuse my childhood. I was entirely unaware of its source until this was pointed out to me by Mr. W. E. A. Axon, who, in a Paper read before the Manchester Literary Club (1884), gives the following particulars: "A work by a German named Massenius was published in Cologne in 1657. It was entitled *Palaestra Dramatica*, and contained, amongst other curious narratives, one of a certain Sgr. Vitalis, who fell into a pit in which a lion, a monkey, and a serpent had also fallen. They were all rescued by an honest countryman, Massaccio, to whom Vitalis promised a marriage dower and his palace. Once safe, he denies all knowledge of his deliverer. The beasts prove more grateful, but a gem which is given to the peasant by the serpent leads to a suspicion that he has stolen it. At the trial Vitalis again denies him, but is overwhelmed with confusion

when the beasts enter the court, and force from him an involuntary confession. A translation of this story appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* for March, 1835. The fable was, however, not invented by Massenius; for, in a slightly different form, it occurs in the *Gesta Romanorum*, that famous collection of mediæval stories. It forms the thirty-ninth tale of the second volume of Wright's edition. It had attracted the notice of Gower, and is told in the *Confessio Amantis*; in this the lion is omitted. Matthew Paris gives it as an apologue told by Richard the Lion Heart. Finally it is found in that storehouse of Eastern legend, the *Calilah u Dimnah*. This was translated by Doni into Italian, and an English rendering of his version appeared in 1570. Massenius may have obtained the story either from the *Gesta* or from this book of Doni."

The following is the Tale (cxix.) as given in the Rev. C. Swan's translation into English of the *Gesta Romanorum*, published in 1824 :

"In the reign of a certain king there lived a proud and oppressive Seneschal. Now, near the Royal Palace, was a forest well-stocked with game; and, by the direction of this person, various pits were dug there, and covered with leaves, for the purpose of entrapping the beasts. It happened that the Sene-

schal himself went into the forest, and, with much exaltation of heart, exclaimed internally, 'Lives there a being in the empire more powerful than I am?' This braggart's thought was scarcely formed, ere he rode upon one of his own pitfalls, and immediately disappeared. The same day had been taken a lion, a monkey, and a serpent. Terrified at the situation into which fate had thrown him, he cried out lustily, and his noise awoke a poor man called Guido, who had come with his ass into that forest to procure firewood, by the sale of which he got his bread. Hastening to the mouth of the pit, he was promised great wealth if he would extricate the Seneschal from his perilous situation. 'My friend,' answered Guido, 'I have no means of obtaining a livelihood except by the faggots which I collect. If I neglect this for a single day, I shall be thrown into the greatest difficulties.' The Seneschal reiterated his promises of enriching him; and Guido went back to the city, and returned with a long cord, which he let down into the pit, and bade the Seneschal bind it round his waist. But before he could apply it to the intended purpose, the lion leaped forward, and seizing upon the cord, was drawn up in his stead. Immediately, exhibiting great signs of pleasure, the beast ran off into the wood. The rope again descended, and the monkey, having

noticed the success of the lion, vaulted above the man's head, and shaking the cord, was in like manner set at liberty, and hurried off to his haunts. A third time the cord was let down, and the serpent, twining around it, was drawn up, gave signs of gratitude, and escaped. 'Oh, my good friend,' said the Seneschal, 'the beasts are gone, now draw me up quickly, I pray you.' Guido complied, and afterwards succeeded in drawing up his horse, which the Seneschal instantly mounted and rode back to the palace. Guido returned home; and his wife, observing that he had come without wood, was very dejected, and inquired the cause. He related what had occurred, and the riches he was to receive for his service. The wife's countenance brightened. Early in the morning her husband went to the palace, but the Seneschal denied all knowledge of him, and ordered him to be whipped for his presumption. The porter executed the directions, and beat him so severely that he left him half dead. As soon as Guido's wife understood this, she saddled their ass, and brought him home in a very infirm state. The sickness which ensued consumed the whole of their little property; but as soon as he had recovered, he returned to his usual occupation in the wood. Whilst he was thus employed, he beheld afar off ten asses laden with packs, and a lion following

close on them, pursuing the path which led toward Guido. On looking narrowly on this beast, he remembered that it was the same which he had freed from its imprisonment in the pit. The lion signified with his foot that he should take the loaded asses, and go home. This Guido did, and the lion followed. On arriving at his own door, the noble beast fawned upon him ; and, wagging his tail as if in triumph, ran back to the woods. Guido caused a proclamation to be made in the different churches, that if any asses had been lost, the owners should come to him ; but no one appearing to demand them, he opened the packages, and to his great joy discovered them full of money. On the second day Guido returned to the forest, but forgot an iron instrument to cleave the wood. He looked up, and beheld the monkey, whose liberation he had effected, and the animal, by the help of teeth and nails, accomplished his desires. Guido then loaded his asses and went home. The next day he renewed his visit to the forest ; and, sitting down to prepare his instrument, discovered the serpent, whose escape he had aided, carrying a stone in its mouth of three colours—on one side white, on another black, and on the third red. It opened its mouth and let the stone fall into Guido's lap. Having done this, it departed. Guido took the stone to a skilful

lapidary, who had no sooner inspected it than he knew its virtues, and would willingly have paid him an hundred florins for it. But Guido refused; and by means of that singular stone obtained great wealth, and was promoted to a military command. The Emperor, having heard of the extraordinary qualities which it possessed, desired to see it. Guido went accordingly; and the Emperor was so struck with its uncommon beauty, that he wished to purchase it at any rate; and threatened, if Guido refused compliance, to banish him from the kingdom. 'My lord,' answered he, 'I will sell the stone; but let me say one thing—if the price be not given, it shall be presently restored to me.' He demanded three hundred florins; and then, taking it from a small coffer, put it into the Emperor's hands. Full of admiration, he exclaimed, 'Tell me where you procured this beautiful stone?' This he did; and narrated from the beginning the Seneschal's accident and subsequent ingratitude. He told how severely he had been injured by his command; and the benefit he had received from the lion, the monkey, and the serpent. Much moved at the recital, the Emperor sent for the Seneschal, and said, 'What is this I hear of thee?' He was unable to reply. 'O wretch!' continued the Emperor; 'monster of ingratitude!

Guido liberated thee from the most imminent danger, and for this thou hast nearly destroyed him. Dost thou see how even irrational things have rendered him good for the service he performed? But thou hast returned evil for good. 'Therefore I deprive thee of thy dignity, which I will bestow upon Guido; and I further adjudge you to be suspended on a cross.' This decree infinitely rejoiced the noblemen of the Empire, and Guido, full of honours and years, ended his days in peace."

Such is the story. I had previously told it in rhyme, with considerable variation, in a small volume of *Poems and Songs*, published in 1881, and in its present shape I have still further varied and amplified it.

The story has always appeared to me to be highly susceptible of presentation in dramatic form, but from its general features, and the improbability (or impossibility) of the plot, it necessarily partakes to some extent of the pantomimic in character. In order to give it relief, and make it suitable for stage presentation, I have introduced other features of a lighter kind. How far I have succeeded in my attempt to produce a Play, I leave it for the critical reader to judge.

T. N.

August, 1892.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

—o—

OLD GAMUL. *A Wood Gatherer in the Forest.*

JOCKEY. *A Farm Servant—Wagoner.*

JENNY. *A Farm Servant—Milkmaid.*

FORESTER.

PORTER.

LORD OF THE MANOR.

BELSIZE. *Friend of the* LORD OF THE MANOR.

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

STURDY VILLAGER.

PRINCE, VIZIER, DUKE, EARLS, LORDS, KNIGHTS.

VILLAGERS, ATTENDANTS, COURIER.

FAIRIES, ELVES, SYLPHS, SPRITES, GNOMES, WOOD-
NYPHPS, WATER-NYPHPS, FAUNS, *and* SATYRS.

Animals.

OLD DAPPLE, THE ASS; LION, SERPENT, MONKEY.

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ACT I.

SCENE I.

THE FOREST—DAY DAWNING.

SCENE II.

NIGHT IN THE FOREST.

SCENE III.

THE FARM AT GAMULSIDE.

SCENE IV.

MORNING IN THE FOREST.

OLD GAMUL.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Forest—day dawning.* FAIRIES, ELVES,
SYLPHS, SPRITES, GNOMES, WOOD-NYMPHS, WATER-
NYMPHS, FAUNS, and SATYRS *discovered.*

FAIRY QUEEN (*speaks.*)

Elf and Sprite,

Water wight,

As my wand is waving,

Sylph and Fairy,

Satyr hairy,

Cease your foolish raving,

And dance a merry measure,

To the tinkle of the stream :

To the rindle

And the trindle

Of the stream.

Dance all ! It is my pleasure.

*(They all dance, singing in chorus ; the
QUEEN of the FAIRIES leading.)*

SONG.

Ere morning dawns,
And Phoebus beams,
O'er grassy lawns,
By rindling streams,
We trip the mazy measure ;
For hand in hand,
In sportive ring,
A jocund band,
We dance and sing,
And pass an hour in pleasure.

Our freaks on those
Of mortal wear—
Or friends or foes—
We now forbear,
And leave them to their waking ;
Content to rest
Till falls the dark,
Then to our quest
We hark ! hark ! hark !
The merry mischief making.

FAIRY QUEEN.

Hold ! Let your gambols cease, and don
Your caps invisible. For see
The morning dawns, the stars are gone,
The squirrel is out, and every tree
Gives forth the chirruping of birds.
And list ! I hear the sound of words
From mortal tongues. Footsteps I hear !
Ah ! ha ! 'tis Jockey, Jockey and his dear !

(Fairies and others all in chorus.)

'Tis simple Jockey, Jockey and his dear !

*[Exit FAIRY QUEEN. The rest retire
into the background.]*

*Enter JENNY and JOCKEY, two rustic lovers. She in
milkmaid's attire, and carrying a milk-pail ; he in
linen blouse, and with a wagoner's whip.*

JENNY.

Early astir, you say, Jockey. Yes truly ;
Summer days are long ; so is a poor girl's toiling.
Frolicsome cows are unruly ;
Brown cows, white cows, swains *(looking coyly at
Jockey, and nodding her head)* need beguiling.

JOCKEY.

So, Jenny, so, you speak rightly,
And summer nights are short for a resting,
But work on the shoulders lies lightly
When the heart has glad Hope for a guest in.
Sing we the song, Jenny, that you taught me—
That with the chorus—the chorus that caught me—
The refrain that to my memory clings ;
Ah ! beating heart, be still, my Jenny sings !

JENNY (*singing.*)

Lucky is the grey light in the morning ;
 When the cows are lowing,
 Green the grass is growing,
To the maid—the simple maiden—'tis a warning.
Early to the fields we go smiling ;
 Summer days are long,
 Labour makes us strong,
And the cows—O the brown cow needs beguiling.

(*Both in chorus.*)

And the cows—O the brown cow needs beguiling.
Summer days are long, and no resting,
 But Autumn brings full measure,
 And the Spring-time—O the pleasure !
When the birds—the little birds are all a-nesting.

JOCKEY (*singing.*)

Winter nights are long, but no matter,
More's the time for cooing ;
Maidens take much wooing,
When a swain—a simple swain's tongue lacks love's
clatter,
Autumn paints the berry as we ponder
Wedded days to come,
True love's lips are dumb,
And the silence—O the silence is no wonder.

(*Both in chorus.*)

And the silence—the sweet silence is no wonder.
Summer days are long, and no resting,
But Autumn brings full measure,
And the Spring-time—O the pleasure !
When the birds—the bonnie birds are all a-nesting.

JOCKEY *and* JENNY (*singing.*)

Hie we to the fields, and our labour ;
Grey skies are bending o'er us,
The lark is out before us,
And the hare—the timid hare is a neighbour.
Morning through the copse clear is breaking,
Flowerward hums the bee,
Golden gorse knows he,
For 'tis honey—O sweet honey he is making.

(Both in chorus.)

For 'tis honey—O sweet honey he is making.
Summer days are long, and no resting,
But Autumn brings full measure,
And the Spring-time—O the pleasure!
When the birds—the little birds are all a-nesting.

[Exeunt FAIRIES and others.]

JENNY.

Bestir you, Jockey; this will never do
Palav'ring here; the waste of time you'll rue.
Your wagon on the road an hour ago
Should have been labouring. The early crow
Mocks your delay. Such trifling should not be
When work is to be done.

JOCKEY.

Thou chidest me,
My Jenny; but the wisest crow of all
The camp, that on the elm tree's summit tall
Churns to his mate, waits the impatient kiss
That speeds him on his errand. So that bliss
Denied me, I can not depart content
To drive the wayward team. The road is drear
Without the kiss of comfort from my dear.

[Tries to kiss her.]

JENNY.

Unhand me, Jockey ! Cease your foolish plaint ;
I, too, have work to do ; 'twould vex a saint
To have her well-ironed bodice rumped thus
By foolish lout. (*He kisses her.*) There, take your
buss,
And don't forget to bring the promised gown
You said you'd buy me at the market town.

JOCKEY (*jingling his purse and cracking his whip.*)

Good saints protect thee, Jenny—sole to crown.

JENNY.

Adieu ! my Jockey ; don't forget the gown !

[*Exit* JENNY.]

JOCKEY.

Ah, Jenny, Jenny ! Just like all your sex,
Destined to tease and vex
Poor mankind. Let the pate be dull,
So that the cupboard and the purse be full.
Kind sweetheart mine ! My wagon to the town,
I'll not forget the longed-for, promised gown !

[*Exit* JOCKEY, *cracking his whip.*]

Enter OLD GAMUL, *with his donkey and cart.*

GAMUL (*singing.*)

Hie thee, Old Dapple ; come, let us be trudging
On to our work—to our work—never grudging
Their leisure to those whose bread needs no winning ;
Their pastime to those whose thread needs no spinning.

We who are poor must be willing and ready
To work. Gee up, Neddy !

Sticks for your fire-lighting, housewives, I bring ye ;
Thanks for your guerdon, and songs I will sing ye ;
Never the child, or the wife, or the maiden,
But welcomes the wain of Old Gamul full laden.

Then over the woodland track, Dapple, go steady ;
Gee up ! whoa ! old Neddy !

Ha ! 'twas a noble wind that yesternight
Racked all the forest ; and a goodly sight
Of fragile branches bars the woodland track
All ready to my hand. Now let us pack
The ample bundles. 'Tis not every day
Such luck awaits us, Dapple, Dapple grey.

(*Enter* FORESTER.)

Good morning, Forester. The wind in troth
Hath—

FORESTER.

Driveller ! save your wind to cool your broth.

GAMUL.

Without such winds the broth were cold and thin
To such as I. Hard 'tis, indeed, to win
The scanty shelter and the frugal fare
That poverty contenteth.

FORESTER.

Have a care
Of bandying words with those whose power and hate
May crush thee.

GAMUL.

Humbly pray I that the fate
Of those who crush both poverty and age
May not be yours.

FORESTER.

Dost thou presume to wage
A war of words with me?

GAMUL.

Nay, master, mine,
It is not so my random words incline ;
But whence proceeds thy vengeful enmity ?
I gather but the rotten sticks that lie
Athwart the path, and thus a service do
To those the forest wide who wander through

At duty's call. The Manor's noble Lord
Hath granted me that boon, and in his word
I put my faith. Thy predecessor here—
Heaven rest his soul!—through many a changing year,
Granted me licence thus to win my bread.

FORESTER.

Peace! insolent knave! My vengeance on thy head
Will surely fall. Thou claimest as a right
To range the forest! words of mine despite;
But hark! ere many days have passed, thou'lt mourn
The weight of my displeasure and my scorn!

GAMUL.

The good saints shrive thee, sir! dire are thy words,
And poverty and eld are broken swords!

[*Exeunt GAMUL, DAPPLE, and cart.*]

FORESTER.

Of all this forest wide the chief I reign,
Saving the Lord, to whom the rich domain
Belongs. Nor mortal can dispute my right
To give or to refuse entrance. No wight
May trespass, save at peril, the forest bounds;
Yet comes this churl, with cart and donkey! zounds!
And leave asks not, as though prescription could
Give him the right to wander through the wood

At his wild will. I can no longer brook
This insolent intrusion. Hook or crook,
Perish he must. I'll rid the forest track
Of his vile presence, though it smack
Of cruelty ! But how ? Ah, there's the rub !
I might way-lay him, brain him with a club,
And leave him to the wolves. No ! this I'll do :
I'll dig a pit, roof it with branches, strew
Rank leaves upon them ; then at break of day,
When comes he to the woodland, my sure prey
Into the pit will crash—man, beast, and wain,
Their grave, which I will straightway fill again.

[*Shakes his fist, and scowls in the
direction of OLD GAMUL.*]

Thy doom is sealed ! for soon, thou caitiff wight,
The soil thou tread'st shall hide thee from my sight.

[*Exit.*]

—o—

SCENE II.—*Night in the Forest.*

FAIRY QUEEN.

Come hither, Deft-toe,
And Caper-dot, and Light-cap ;
Come hither, Cap-mote,
And Dews-nap, and Tingle-tap.

FAIRIES.

We are here at thy command, good Queen.

FAIRY QUEEN.

There is mischief brewing ; it is in the air ;
All our good friends I charge you have in care.

FAIRIES.

Our friends we have in care.

[They stand aside.]

FAIRY QUEEN.

Come hither, Nick-stitch,
And Glee-imp, and Burn-blue ;
Come hither, Hop-twigg,
And Yo-yo, and Quack-loo.

FAIRIES.

Here, at thy call, we come, good Queen.

FAIRY QUEEN.

The Forester is yours to circumvent.

FAIRIES.

His schemes we'll circumvent.

FAIRY QUEEN.

For bad is his intent

Towards Gamul, whom protect,
For he hath our respect.

FAIRIES.

Gamul hath our respect.

[They stand aside.]

FAIRY QUEEN.

Come hither, Bell-tongue,
And Ice-touch, and Lap-fine ;
Come hither, Grot-wench,
And Ray-fleet and Elf-wine.

FAIRIES.

Good Queen, at thy command we come.

FAIRY QUEEN.

Jockey and Jenny true lovers are,
But true love's course it is ours to mar.

FAIRIES.

With a jilt, and a jolt and a jar !

FAIRY QUEEN.

Take Jenny's heart and give it a twist.

FAIRIES.

We'll give her heart a twist !

FAIRY QUEEN.

Take Jockey's head and fill it with mist.

FAIRIES.

We'll fill his head with mist !
In witch's garb we'll spoil his purse,
To witless dree the beldam's dole ;
In gabardine we'll him cajole,
And ban him with the night-hag's curse !

[They stand aside.]

FAIRY QUEEN.

Come hither, Oat-pea,
And Heel-drip and Cling-goe ;
Come hither, Grig-wort,
And Zilk-pet and 'Mint-floe,
And little Ya-ya,
Ha ! ha !

FAIRIES.

We come ! we come ! we come !

FAIRY QUEEN (*singing.*)

Attend your Queen,
And let the sheen
Of moon and stars surround her ;

For it is she
Rules destiny,
And naught may e'er confound her.

FAIRIES (*in chorus.*)

For thou our Queen rul'st destiny,
And naught shall e'er confound thee !
We hail our Queen,
And with the sheen
Of moon and stars surround her ;
For it is she
Rules destiny,
And naught shall e'er confound her !

[*Exeunt* OMNES.

Enter the FORESTER.

In this the early dawn I come to view
The task I set my minions to do ;
To mark the trap, if all compact with care
The object of my deadly hate to snare.
Sleep flies the couch of those absorbed in schemes
Of devilry. For waking thoughts and dreams
Pilfer the rest that weary bodies crave.

[*Lightning and distant thunder.*

D

But that the person of a hoary knave
Should interpose to rob me of my rest,
Is more than flesh can bear! A sorry jest
This grim reality. The noisome pest
That haunts our woods and fields, we crush,
And count the riddance cheap. So will I brush
This human pest aside, and find again
The rest and peace I long have sought in vain.

*[Lightning and thunder. The FORESTER
unconsciously steps on to the roof of the
pit, which gives way beneath his feet,
and he falls with a shriek into the abyss.
GNOMES rising from out of the ground.]*

KING of the GNOMES (*sings.*)

Ho, ho! Ho, ho! Ha, ha! Ha, ha! He, he!
Gnomes that burrow underground are we.
Roots and earthworms we love, but a daintier dish
Will the Forester make—cooked as we wish.

(*Chorus of GNOMES.*)

We'll slit him and nick him,
And make three meals of him;
Clean shall we pick him,
The ribs, and the head, and the heels of him!

KING (*sings.*)

Ho, ho! Ho, ho! Ha, ha! Ha, ha! He, he!
Solid and safe inside the earth live we;
Many's the dead man's carcass our larder hath within,
But a live one for a change will delight our gallopin.

(*Chorus of GNOMES.*)

So we'll slit him and nick him,
And make three meals of him;
Clean shall we pick him,
The ribs, and the head, and the heels of him!

[*Exeunt.*

—O—

SCENE III.—*The Farm at Gamulside. Enter JOCKEY.*

JOCKEY.

An empty pate, or an empty purse,
Odds crumpets and cat's eyene! which is the worse?
But both conjoined—ah, the misery of that!
'Tis a woeful conjunction under one hat.

[*Paces about in great trouble.*

The stars are against me—the envious Fates
Are leagued to destroy me, so bitter my straits.
Wagon and horses stuck in a ditch,
Money and gown, all gone to the witch

For spelling my fortune ! Sad, sad is my case,
And worse still to come with Jenny to face !
'Twill tax the poor wits I have left to disarm her
Displeasure ! Ah ! here comes my charmer.

Enter JENNY singing. (JOCKEY unobserved.)

When my true love's away,
I cannot long be gay,
 Though songs I sing.
A merry heart is mine,
But I puke, and pule and pine
 The livelong day.

I would not e'er complain,
Were he once more back again
 My joys to share.
And come again he will,
He is my true love still—
 Or here or there.

JOCKEY.

It's neither here nor there,
 Though it's both of them.
I, Jockey, am here, and thou, Jenny, art there,
 Or the froth of them ;

For my head, like froth, is light,
And my heart (*advancing to her side*) ah ! Jenny !
Is a leaden weight.

[*He shakes his head and
pulls a long face.*]

JENNY (*starting.*)

What has come over my Johnny !

JOCKEY.

A Johnny indeed !
He is well-named a "Johnny"
Who barter his corn for weed.

JENNY.

Ah ! Jockey, at the fair thou'st been unlucky ;
Well, never mind ! cheer up ! cheer up, my chucky !

[*Chucks him under the chin.*]

This sennight 'tis the village festival,
Thou shalt escort me thither, so that all
May view me dressed, buxom, and fine, and smart,
In the gown you have brought me from the mart.

JOCKEY (*with a start that causes her to retire suddenly
from him with a scream, and in a fright.*)

The gown is flown, and I will go drown !

JENNY.

What ! no gown ! Thou light-handed lover ;
Oh ! thou close fist—now do I discover
Thou playest me false ; thy promises fair
Dissolve with absence into empty air !

[*Weeping.*

Thou car'st not for me—there !

JOCKEY.

Nay, nay, my Jenny—come, my sweetheart, come !
It is Miss Fortune all, that, meddlesome,
Hath thus o'ertaken me. But I will bate
Nor heart, nor hope, till better fate
Is mine.

[*Holding his hands to his head,
and pacing up and down.*

My head is clearer. Trust me, Jenny dear,
This cloudy sky of Fortune too shall clear !
A truce to trouble ! Let it ne'er divide
Two loving hearts : turn surely will the tide.

JOCKEY *and* JENNY (*duet.*)

Cease railing at Fortune,

Meet life with a kiss,

Nor needlessly wish it

One cycle of bliss ;

For cares but embroider

Our seasons of joy,

Like feathery cloudlets

That sprinkle the sky.

Cease railing at Fortune,

Take life as it comes ;

If wanting in dainties,

Make glad o'er the crumbs.

Each little is sweet, if

A smile the lip wears,

But bitter the morsel

When moistened with tears.

[*Exeunt.*

—O—

SCENE IV.—*Morning in the Forest. Enter OLD GAMUL with his DONKEY and cart.*

GAMUL (*singing as he bustles about, getting out his ropes, and making ready for loading.*)

Again the silver-crested streams
Reflect the morn's refulgent beams.

ECHO (*in the distance*). Refulgent beams !

Each stately tree and mountain height
Is canopied with golden light.

ECHO. With golden light !

The labourer, with contented smile,
Begins his daily round of toil.

ECHO. The round of toil !

Night with her dreams is chased away,
All hail ! the glad returning day.

ECHO. Returning day !

The wily fox within the brake—

FORESTER (*from the pit.*)

Help ! Gamul, help ! for pity's sake !

GAMUL (*startled.*)

What means that cry ? Is it a voice I hear ?
Or doth a waking dream delude my ear ?

[*He gazes round and descries the pit,*

*to the brink of which he approaches
with cautious steps, and looks down.*

Whose is that voice salutes my startled ear?

FORESTER.

Help ! Gamul, help !

GAMUL.

It is the Forester !

*[He seizes his ropes, ties them together,
and casts one end down the pit.*

Ah ! now he grasps it. So, hold fast ! Heave ho !

[Straining with all his might.

It will not budge an ell—pull high, pull low.

Come, Dapple, brute, *(unharnessing the ass, and
fastening the rope to the gears,)*

thy shoulders to the test,
Thou'rt worth a dozen weaklings at their best.

*[They both strain and pull—the rope rises, and
at length a LION is seen to emerge from
the pit. GAMUL shrinks back with fear.*

Protect us, Heaven ! Else am I all undone,
No power can succour lend but only One !

E

[*The LION harms him not, but circling round GAMUL three times, he at last stoops before him to show his gratitude, and then bounds away into the thick forest.*

FORESTER.

Help! Gamul, help!

GAMUL.

Again that cry!

'Twere dastard sin to stand here maundering by
When fellow mortal seeks my aid.

[*He again casts the rope down the pit.*

'Tis grasped! Hold fast! Be not afraid!

[*He drags, and a Serpent rises.*

Horror on horrors! All the saintly powers
Protect me! See the reptile cowers
Nor harms me! Wave-like now it glides away!
Alas! alack a day! alack a day!
With trembling heart and lessening hope,
Again adown I cast the rope—
'Tis he at last! He climbs! Behold!

[*A huge MONKEY emerges with a bound, chatters and leaps with boisterous glee,*

and at length scampers away into the forest.

Powerless my arm, my blood runs cold ;
What creature next from out the depth will come ?
What horrid shape to strike with terror dumb ?
And yet, methought I heard a voice
Of human ken, invoke me thrice.
Once more I'll try, I could not rest
With conscience chiding in my breast.

[He casts the rope. Dragging, the FORESTER rises to the surface, and stands with half-averted gaze. GAMUL seizes his hand, which the other scornfully withdraws.]

Thank heaven ! My efforts now are well repaid,
Rejoiced am I to lend a needy brother aid.
A kindly Providence hath seen it fit
To save thee from this fearsome pit.
'Twas doubtless dug by ruthless hands
For purpose dire ! For cruel ends !

[The FORESTER draws back with sudden start, conscience pricked.]

FORESTER.

See'st thou yon glade where upward goest
The smoke above the trees? Thou knowest
'Tis my abode. This night attend,
And find a rich rewarding hand.

[*Exit* FORESTER.]

GAMUL.

'Tis well! 'tis ill—I would not have it thought
That hope of base reward my willing service bought.
But ill or well, his bitter enmity
By gratitude must now replacéd be.

[*Exit.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

THE FARM AT GAMULSIDE.

SCENE II.

EVENING—THE PORTER'S LODGE.

SCENE III.

THE VILLAGE—THE FESTIVAL.

SCENE IV.

THE FOREST—EVENING.

SCENE V.

A DARKENED CAVERN IN THE FOREST.

SCENE VI.

NIGHT IN THE FOREST.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Farm at Gamulside.*

Enter JOCKEY.

JOCKEY (*sings.*)

At Gamulside there lives a lass—

I know not where her peer may be—

She's fairer than the fairest maid

That graces poet's minstrelsy.

The sunlight of her kindly face

Is dowry more than gold or land ;

Her smile, a richer treasure than

E'er rose 'neath touch of fairy's wand.

The spring-time wakens leaf and bud,

And sprinkles flowers on every spray ;

The summer gilds the mountain top,

And clothès the vale with verdure gay ;

'Tis spring-time where my darling is,

The light of love illumines her eyes ;

The beauty of her tender glance

Broods o'er my soul like summer skies.

When o'er the russet moorland hills,
In wild career the whistling gale
Speeds on its wintry way, and fills
With drifting snow the narrow vale,
I sit beside the glowing hearth,
Nor count the moments as they glide ;
'Tis summer in yon forest home,
With the dear angel by my side.

There's truth in proverbs. Many a time have I heard my old Mother say, "'Tis a long lane that has never a turning." Sooth ! but that was a careless witch to go hide my gear under the dog-rose hedge. Witch ! Aye, but a fairy turned witch for the nonce—so I read the riddle. But I must see Jenny. (*Knocks at the door.*) Come, Jenny lass, an ora half-hour's gossip never hindered work.

[*Enter* JENNY.

JENNY.

Oh ! the gown, Jockey, is lovely indeed, and hits my figure and complexion to a very tee.

JOCKEY.

Aye, verity.

JENNY.

And so it was the wicked fairies, you say, that took and hid it thus away?

JOCKEY.

That, indeed, is my surmise, Jenny, for never a true witch-hag would have laid it under a hedge, purse and all. Besides, did not I see the fairy-ring near to the spot where the frolicsome revellers had passed the night?

JENNY.

How delightful! Just to think that my wardrobe has been handled and admired by the Fairy Queen! A very queen shall I be, Jockey, at the festival.

JOCKEY.

A fairy queen, a fair queen, a bewitching queen! my Jenny. What if thy witching glances turn my head again? My wandering senses may not be as easily recovered as my siller.

JENNY.

And thou, Jockey, shalt lead me to the village green, where never dancer shall with lighter heart trip the glad measure.

F

JOCKEY and JENNY (*Duet.*)*

I'll lead thee to the village green,
And thou shalt be my beauteous queen.
The birds that wanton on the tree,
Shall sing no sweeter songs to me.

The flowers whose fragrance floods the air,
I'll bind within thy braided hair ;
Nor jewelled queen upon her throne,
A prouder look or gait will own.

I'll lead thee to the village green,
And thou shalt be my bosom's queen,
And through the coming years afar,
Thy love shall be my guiding star.

* Jenny's part is necessarily varied, and is as follows:—

Thou'lt lead me to the village green,
And I shall be thy bosom's queen.
The birds that warble on the tree,
Shall sing no sweeter songs to thee.
The flowers whose fragrance fills the air,
Thou'lt bind within my braided hair ;
Nor jewelled queen upon her throne,
A prouder look or gait will own.
Thou'lt lead me to the village green,
And I shall be thy bosom's queen ;
And through the coming years afar,
Our love shall be our guiding star.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Evening.*—*The PORTER'S Lodge at the entrance to the Grange.*

Enter GAMUL.

GAMUL.

This errand suits me not. Misgivings rise
Within my breast, that this night's enterprise
Will have no gracious ending. In his face
No ray of gratitude could I discern, nor trace
Of thankfulness for succour lent, but scorn
And wrathful hate. The recompense is shorn
Of graciousness that grudging heart bestows.
And yet retrace my steps I cannot dare ;
His wish is a command that, Heaven knows !
I may not disregard. Well could I spare
Reward for timely help.

[Knocks at the PORTER'S gate.

Enter PORTER.

PORTER.

What is thy quest ?

GAMUL.

This morn thy master gave behest
That I on him this night should wait,
The reason why I seek this gate.

PORTER.

Marry ! 'tis strange—'tis passing strange !
Seldom doth mortal seek the Grange ;
Howbeit, sire, pass in, may be
Thou own'st the Master's friendship privily ?

GAMUL.

Contrariwise, the truth I fear will read.
This morn whilst well within the forest bounds,
As is my wont, gathering the rotten wood
That lay around, there smote a human cry
Upon my startled ear, and, yawning by
A fearsome pit I saw. I threw
My ropes adown and stoutly drew.
Up came the Forester. As all amazed
I looked, he started back and gazed.
At length he silence brake, and said,
“Where curls yon smoke within the glade
“My mansion stands : this night attend,
“And find a rich rewarding friend.”

PORTER.

Hark, reverend sir, thou mayest scorn
My hint, but I would urge return.

[GAMUL *makes gesture of impatience.*

Hold ! heed him not, 'tis but a snare.
What ! still persist ? Stay, have a care :
Consider this : How came the pit—
Think'st thou the biter was not bit ?

GAMUL.

It cannot be. Thy words are vain.
No ! but for me he there in gloom had lain,
A victim to starvation, or the prey
Of savage beasts that through the forest stray.
I needs must go, for what excuse
Might shield me, if I dared refuse ?

PORTER.

Go, if the end thou wilt not well compute,
But list ! On what has passed, I pray be mute !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE PARTIALLY CHANGES. THE FORESTER'S HOUSE.

Enter GAMUL.

GAMUL.

I fear me much the Porter spake me fair,
No hospitable look the Grange doth wear,
But dark and moody like the Forester
Its master. Yet return I cannot dare,
I venture must.

[*Knocks at the door, the FORESTER appears.*]

FORESTER.

Thou com'st at tardy pace
To claim thy recompense. 'Twere act of grace
To give thee all thy due—I will not stint
The reckoning.

GAMUL.

Good master, if by dint
Of fortune I did lend a helping hand
To rescue thee, it were a base demand
To claim reward ; for generous bosoms feel
Reward sufficient in another's weal.

FORESTER.

Silence ! thou hoary knave ! The longed-for hour
Hath come at last which gives thee to my power ;
And vengeance—not reward—upon thy head
Shall swiftly fall.

*[Seizes a club, and strikes
GAMUL to the ground.]*

GAMUL.

Mercy ! (FORESTER *strikes*) Hath mercy fled
Thy breast, if ere it found a lodgment there ?

[FORESTER strikes him repeatedly.]

'Tis coward's work to crush the weak ! Beware
The retribution !

[FORESTER *strikes him, and
leaves him for dead.*

FORESTER.

Ah ! revenge is dear
And salves the rankling sores of many a year !

[*Exit* FORESTER.

[*Enter* PORTER.

PORTER (*gazing at old GAMUL.*)

It is as I foretold. There is no ruth
In that obdurate heart, nor age nor youth
Awakes his sympathy.

[GAMUL *shows signs of Life.*

The old man speaks !

GAMUL.

Mercy ! Forbear !

PORTER.

It is a friend that seeks
To succour thee in this thy dire distress ;
I cannot more—'twere cruel to do less.

[*Raises GAMUL, and bears him away.*

SCENE III.—*The Village—The Festival. Youths and maidens dressed in festive array, conversing and making merry. Old folks resting on the rustic seats around the elm tree. Gipsies telling fortunes—Booths with merry-Andrews—The village Ale-house: table outside.*

CHORUS OF VILLAGE TOPERS.

'Tis windy on the hill,
But the mill it standeth still,
For the dusty Miller clinks his can—
He clinks his can—he clinks his can,
For Boniface to fill.
O, 'tis windy on the hill!

*Enter JOCKEY and JENNY, dressed in their finery,
and the admiration of all eyes.*

JOCKEY (*sings.*)

Fair is my love, and good as fair,
Endowed with every tender charm;
Her gentle voice—its accents rare,
A colder breast than mine might warm.
What though yon cottage lowly is,
There's worth and grace where she is seen;
Nor marble halls, nor palaces,
Enshrine more wealth their walls between.

I wander down the bosky vale,
The apple bloom is on the tree ;
Nature with gladness floods the dale,
And love o'erflows my heart for thee.
O give to me the evening hour,
In love to clasp that hand of thine ;
To own thy beauty's magic power,
And press those lips, and call thee mine !

JOCKEY.

The dance ! the dance ! Come, giddy heads, your
feet
To music's witching strains, let timely beat,
And prank the hours in jovial mirth and glee ;
Come, Jenny, lead the dance—the dance with me.

JENNY.

A willing heart makes willing feet, and so
The stream of music shall not useless flow.

THE COMPANY.

The dance ! the dance ! Each gallant to his Jo !

[*They all join in a rustic dance.*]

JOCKEY.

After the dance, the song.

G

THE COMPANY.

A song! a song!
A song with a chorus—neither short nor long.

JOCKEY.

Jenny shall sing. (*to JENNY*) Sweet warbler, tune thy
throat.

[*To the MUSICIANS,*

Tune up your timbers, boys! Give us the note.

JENNY.

First let me choose my song. What shall it be?
Of love—of fair romance—of chivalry?

JOCKEY.

A noble trio! Sing of all the three!

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

But most of all of love—for love doth hold
Young hearts in thrall, and renovates the old.

JENNY (*sings.*)

I sing of love. A lady fair
Wept on the bosom of her lord;
The rattling drums, the trumpets' blare
Called him to arms; and never sword
Was borne by braver hand.

Said the lady fair, thy page I'll be,
For from thy side I cannot live ;
And I will bear the brunt with thee
Of war's alarms ; and take and give
Thy message and command.

The lady page and the gallant knight
To the battle went away,
And they fought the foeman left and right
In the thickest of the fray.
And their's was the victor's side.

So love did shield them in the strife,
Till back to their home they came ;
And, wedded husband, wedded wife,
Known was their love and fame
Through all the country wide.

[*The COMPANY applaud.*

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

Romance and chivalry—the mainspring love ;
Love is the lever that the world doth move.

STURDY VILLAGER.

A truce to romance and chivalry ! there is a note
of sadness in 'em dulls my spirits ; nathless, Jenny

sang well. But give me rather the twin moonrakers,
mirth and revelry.

JOCKEY.

Mirth and revelry ! Ay, by the mass ! thou lovest
these more than a week's honest work, to thy undoing !

STURDY VILLAGER.

Dost flout me ?

JOCKEY.

Ay, what then ?

STURDY VILLAGER.

Take back thy flouts,
Or, by my halidom, prepare for clouts !

[*They both begin to strip. Screaming and
excitement amongst THE COMPANY.*]

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

Let not our merry-making end in blows ;
When hasty words are spoken, Heaven knows !
'Tis wise to treat them even as a jest,
Nor fight nor keep them rankling in the breast ;
Your prowess, both, is known beyond a doubt,
But if contend you will, then try a wrestling bout.

JOCKEY.

Agreed !

STURDY VILLAGER.

Agreed !

THE COMPANY.

A wrestling bout's the thing.

Hurrah ! a wrestling bout ! A ring ! a ring !

STURDY VILLAGER.

Twice in three ?

JOCKEY.

So let it be.

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

Who throws twice the victor he.

[*They strip, shake hands, and wrestle.*

JOCKEY *throws his antagonist.*

THE COMPANY.

A throw ! a throw !

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

For Jock the score stands one ;

Broad back to mother earth—'twas deftly done.

[*They wrestle again—the STURDY
VILLAGER throws.*]

THE COMPANY.

A throw !

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

'Tis one and one—an even score ;
The game is lively—one encounter more.

[*They close for the third time,
and JOCKEY is victorious.*]

THE COMPANY.

A noble throw ! a noble throw indeed !

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

A ringing cheer shall be the victor's meed.

THE COMPANY.

Hip ! hip ! hurrah ! Hurrah ! Hurrah !

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

'Tis meet
That one cheer more the vanquished brave should
greet.

Hip ! hip ! hurrah ! (*in which JOCKEY joins ; the
combatants shaking hands.*)

ANCIENT VILLAGER (*sings.*)

It is a good old English sport,
Might please a king and all his court,
To view the sturdy wrestlers grip,
And strive and strain with arm and hip,
Till bones and muscles bend and crack,
Like anchor cables on the rack.

Then hey! the tussle
Of bone and muscle,
Sing ho! for the wrestling bout!

Chorus. Then hey! the tussle
Of bone and muscle,
Sing ho! for the wrestling bout!

At arm's length see the Samsons twain
With levelled buttocks thrust. Again,
Like cleft oak rising from the ground,
They sway in sinewy shackles bound;
Till on his back with stifled groan,
The vanquished combatant is thrown.

A throw! A throw!
Shout high and low,
Hurrah for the wrestling bout!

Chorus. A throw! A throw!
Shout high and low,
Hurrah for the wrestling bout!

To mother earth his back is given,
His face salutes the blue of heaven.
Agility and strength unite,
In this the brave and bloodless fight ;
And dexterous skill the joust can gain,
Where mere brute force contends in vain.

Then hey ! the tussle
Of skill and muscle,
Sing ho ! for the wrestling bout !

Chorus. Then hey ! the tussle
Of skill and muscle,
Sing ho ! for the wrestling bout !

[*Exeunt OMNES.*

—O—

SCENE IV.—*The Forest—Evening.* Enter GAMUL.

GAMUL.

It seems an age ago, since prone these feet
The Keeper's dwelling sought. To live is sweet,
Even to eld, else had I been content
To find repose in death. If he repent
Not of his enmity I am undone !
Meagre my wants, yet I resource have none

Save the rude harvest which the forest yields
After the storm. The higher Power that shields
The wretched, be my trust !

[*A huge MONKEY appears in the distance,
grinning, chattering and exhibiting other
evident signs of pleasure on seeing GAMUL.*

Mercy o' me !

It is the Ape belated that I see
Which from the pit made ladder of my rope
To gain his freedom.

[*The MONKEY approaches, making antics of
delight, then, climbing a tree, begins to
cast down branches right and left.*

I can never cope
With this profusion of good things the brute
Provides for me—of gratitude the fruit.
To clear it all will take me busy days.

[*A hissing sound is heard, and a SERPENT
appears. GAMUL recoils at the sight.*

It is the Serpent ! Its entrancing gaze
Rivets my feet. I fain would turn and 'scape,
But cannot. (*The SERPENT speaks.*)

H

GAMUL.

Thine the voice but not the shape
Of humankind.

THE SERPENT.

'Tis told in noblest song
The grisly Serpent had a languaged tongue.
List, then, the speech of creature rude,
Nor deem that such lack gratitude.
Know this : a generous heart may dwell
Beneath a rugged coat of mail.
Accept, I pray, the gift I bring,
Nor scorn a creature's offering.
'Tis fashioned by our tribe alone,
Its name—THE ADDER'S MAGIC STONE,
And scarce Peru's deep caverns hold
Its worth in glittering yellow gold.
Nor boots it when, or where, or how,
If e'er the stone to barter, thou,
Through want or wisdom, art inclined,
Unless its value thou shalt find,
*Though bound by lock or chest or chain,
It shall return to thee again.*

[*The SERPENT lays a precious jewel at the
feet of GAMUL, and, turning, vanishes.*

GAMUL, *lost in admiration, takes it in his hand.*

GAMUL.

A noble gift indeed ! And calculate
To grace the palace of a king. Strange fate
That makes it mine.

[*A subdued roar is heard in the distance, and
GAMUL, starting, sees a LION emerging
from the underwood.*

Hast thou too, gifts in store—
Or com'st to seek the prey thou erst forebore ?
. . . . The kingly beast recedes,
And beckons me to follow where he leads !
Taught by thy humbler mates, I will not fear
To accept thy guidance. (*He follows.*)

—O—

SCENE V.—*A darkened Cavern in the Forest.*
Enter GAMUL.

GAMUL.

Hither the Lion led me ere he sought
The forest depths. . . . I am distraught

With wonderment. In gloom each object lies
Hid from my unaccustomed eyes.

[*He peers into the cavern, advancing cautiously.*
The scene gradually brightens.

And now a twilight glamour steals
Athwart the walls and dim reveals ;
So, peering round, my anxious quest
Descries a massive oaken chest (*pointing*)
By stalagmitic bars invest
On shelving rock ! I will compete
To wrench it from its rocky seat !

[*GAMUL, after much effort, drags the coffer to
the ground with sudden crash ; and being
partially broken by the fall, there rolls
from it gold and diamonds and precious
stones of every kind. Scene suddenly
changes.*

—O—

SCENE VI.—*Night in the Forest. FAUNS, SATYRS,
and FAIRIES in high revelry.*

FIRST SATYR (*sings.*)

The Monkey is the drollest elf
That wanders through the forest wide ;

To nutty fruits he helps himself,
And leaves a pick for some beside.

Chorus.

We know his haunts ! We know his haunts !

SECOND SATYR (*sings.*)

The Serpent is the cunningest cove
That wriggles through the forest wide ;
The gift of speech that comes from Jove,
He hath, and mickle more beside.

Chorus.

We know his haunts ! We know his haunts !

THIRD SATYR (*sings.*)

The Lion is the noblest brute
That ranges through the forest wide ;
Magnanimous and brave to boot,
He is the king of all beside.

Chorus.

We know his haunts ! We know his haunts !

FAIRY QUEEN (*sings.*)

The faithful Dapple pricks his ears
As home the treasure trove he bears.

Chorus of Fairies.

But gold breeds many a care,
So mortals, pray beware !

FAIRY QUEEN (*sings.*)

This lucky night goes Gamul home,
The richest wight in Christendom !

Chorus.

But mortals, pray beware !
For gold brings many a care.

Goldener is fairy gold,
Than is that in cavern told.
The cowslip's golden yellow—
And the daffodil its fellow—
More golden are than that whose birth
Is deep in heart of mother earth.
Your gold breeds many a care,
So mortals frail beware,
Beware ! Beware ! Beware !

[*Exeunt FAIRIES, FAUNS and SATYRS.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A ROOM IN THE MANSION.

SCENE II.

THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE FOREST BY MOONLIGHT.

SCENE III.

THE MARBLE HALL.

SCENE IV.

THE WEDDING.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Room in the Mansion of the LORD OF THE MANOR. Enter the LORD OF THE MANOR, FRIENDS, and ATTENDANTS.*

LORD.

The fame of this unequalled prize
Hath reached mine ear. Say, good Belsize,
Thou having seen't, doth it uphold
The character of worth untold
That fame records ?

BELSIZE.

It doth, my Lord,
Fame no exaggerated word
Hath spoken. It doth combine
All that is rare in deepest mine,
Or sea or air. Unparalleled
The beauty of that emerald ;
The purple of the amethyst
No mind of mortal ever wist ;

The topaz bright, with hue of gold,
Its peer might mortal ne'er behold ;
And, as the sun blood-red is seen,
Through densest fogs that intervene,
So gleams the ruby's richest hue,
From bed of sapphire mild and blue ;
And beryl and sardonyx are there,
To lend the gem proportion fair ;
But foremost of the bright conclave—
Nor brought from mine nor Indian wave—
A diamond, pure as clearest stream
The soul might fancy in a dream,
Cleaves the rapt air with bars of light,
And holds in thrall the ravished sight :
These when thine eye hath dwelt upon,
The gem unrivalled thou shalt own.

LORD.

A noble picture ! If it half sustain
Thy glowing eulogy, then, not in vain
Its claim all other gems to over-vie.
Impatient I to view this prodigy.
At my behest Gamul this day will bear
The treasure hitherward. (*To ATTENDANTS*)
Let messenger be sent to speed his coming.

ATTENDANT.

Even now, my Lord, he comes.

Enter GAMUL (bearing the jewel protected by a silken coverlet.)

GAMUL (*bowing*).

My duty to your Lordship.

LORD.

Thou art welcome. We fain would view the precious gem whose fame hath reached us by a hundred tongues.

GAMUL.

'Tis at your Lordship's service, and seemlier would it grace this princely hall than my poor domicile. (*Uncovering the jewel and laying it upon the dais arranged for its reception*).

LORD.

A gorgeous jewel in very deed! (*Taking it in his hand.*) The reality, Belsize, eclipses even thy pronouncement!

BELSIZE.

'Tis so, my Lord. Words are tame in presence of such magnificence!

LORD (*replacing the jewel.*)

Would that thou mightest tell us, GAMUL, the story of its possession. Such fragments as I have heard of it are passing strange.

GAMUL.

If it please your Lordship. It happened thus :

My Lord, I was poor and lone, except for faithful Dapple, the companion and sharer of my daily toil. When the winds whistled through the trees, and the boughs were racked by the storm, the forest tracks were strewn with withered branches ; by your favour I gained a scanty living gathering these, and vending them to the villagers round about.

It might well be deemed that mine was a grateful service in clearing the forest tracks from the wreckage ; and for many years was it so considered. But there came the Forester, who grudged me my scanty recompense, and vowed dire vengeance on my head.

Plying my daily work, one morning I halted where the faggots were thickly strewn, and scarce had bent my back when a doleful cry for succour sounded on my ear. "Help, Gamul, help!" cried a voice as from the deeps.

Amazed I stood gazing around speechless and

awe-struck. Again was the cry repeated, and peering into the forest shade I descried the mouth of a yawning pit. Hastening forward, I stood on its brink, and cried aloud, "Who speaks below!" "Help, Gamul, help!" was the answer that for the third time smote upon my ear.

LORD.

A dastard's work this pit—that dastard the Forester, and he the deserved victim, though intended for another. (*To ATTENDANTS*). Go, bring him hither without delay. A speedy vengeance be upon his head!

GAMUL.

May it please your Lordship's noble heart to let mercy be meted to him in equal measure to his misdeeds and my forgiveness.

LORD.

Mercy be unto the merciful—but to your story.

GAMUL (*continues*).

In haste I seized my ropes, and tying them together dropped one end down into the abyss and began to drag. The load was beyond my strength; so, unharnessing Dapple, with our united efforts the rope

began to rise, and at length a mighty Lion rose to greet my terrified gaze. The kingly brute harmed me not, but bending at my feet it rose and sped away into the dim recesses of the forest.

Again I cast the rope, and dragging with all my might, a grisly Serpent met my affrighted view. Methought my last hour had come, but the creature, approaching my feet, signified its gratitude, and then glided away into the forest depths.

Yet again I dropped the rope down the abyss, and scarcely had it reached the bottom when a huge Monkey came clambering to the surface. The rescued brute, expressing its joy, danced round and round with gleeful chatterings, till at length with a cry both long and loud it scampered away.

Once more I strove, and now a human form was seen to rise. It was the Forester. Voiceless he stood and looked askance. Then, breaking silence, he spoke: "Seest thou yonder glade? There stands my abode; this night attend, and thou shalt find how rich is thy reward." Then with hurried steps he took his way.

LORD.

Good! Proceed.

GAMUL.

That night, unwillingly, but fearing to disobey his command, I sought the glade. The kindly Porter through whose gate I passed, would have dissuaded me, but I listened not. Suffice it to say, that, instead of reward, I was beaten with a club, and cast out for dead. Such, indeed, would have been my fate had not the Porter found me senseless on the ground, and, carrying me to his home, nursed and tended me for many weary weeks. To the Porter, under Providence, I owe my life.

LORD.

Forester and Porter shall be repaid in kind !

GAMUL.

Again restored to health, my only resource was the forest.

Thither one evening, I bent my steps, and, strange to tell, the Monkey, waiting my coming, provided me with faggots in plenty.

Then the grisly Serpent appeared, bringing with it the Adder's Magic Stone, which now thou seest, and laid it at my feet.

Afterwards the Lion. He, beckoning me to follow, I gathered courage to take him for my guide,

till, reaching the mouth of a cavern, he bounded away out of my sight.

Exploring the cavern I found treasure in store, and of many precious kinds.

Such, may it please your Lordship, the strange story which scarcely may be believed.

LORD.

Strange indeed, yea, passing strange. The lowly creatures, Belsize, might teach a lesson to their masters.

BELSIZE.

Indeed, my Lord, the story hath a moral as golden as its ending.

[*Enter* SERVANT.

LORD (*to* SERVANT.)

What is thy deliverance?

SERVANT.

A Messenger hath arrived in haste, my Lord.

LORD.

Let him have entrance, immediate.

[*Exit* SERVANT—*Enter* MESSENGER.

LORD.

Why so distraught—What is thy message?

MESSENGER (*bowing.*)

May it please your Lordship.
With ready hearts to do thy will
We sought the Keeper's domicile ;
But not in Grange, nor glade around,
Nor domicile was Keeper found.
As back with tardy pace we rode
Through the thick forest dim and broad,
A human form from bough bestrung,
High o'er our lonely pathway hung !
Soon on the turf that form we laid,
Within the solemn forest shade,
And each, transfixed, did mute survey
The Keeper's stiff and pallid clay !

LORD.

Thus Justice waits with sure remeed—
His own right hand hath wrought the deed !
(*To ATTENDANTS.*) It is my will, that from this day
The Porter, for his generosity,
Shall be my trusted Forester, and rule
With wise discretion—just, yet merciful.

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GAMUL.

One favour at your Lordship's hands I pray :
That thou accept the gem, whose brilliancy
Ill harmonises with the meaner things
That grace my cottage.

LORD.

'Tis a gift that Kings
Might greatly envy. And my warm esteem
And thanks be thine. But it would ill beseem
The pleased and proud recipient to dream
Of bare acceptance. Let it then suffice
That we become the owner of the prize
On value given. This gold, therefore, be thine,

(Handing GAMUL a bag of gold.)

And so the Adder's Magic Stone be mine.

GAMUL.

As pleases you, my Lord. Albeit it is strange
That gold for stone should be a fair exchange.

[Exit GAMUL, bowing.]

LORD.

Renowned this Stone shall be, I will invite
Princes and Earls to view the goodly sight ;

And Connoisseurs from distant lands of earth
Shall come to read the riddle of its birth.

[*Exeunt* LORD, FRIENDS *and* ATTENDANTS.

—O—

SCENE II.—*The Outskirts of the Forest by Moonlight.*
Old GAMUL's Cottage. The Fairies in revelry.

FAIRY QUEEN (*sings.*)

The Magic Stone
From his Lordship's sight,
And eke from his guests,
Has vanished quite.

CHORUS.

With a fi-la-loo ! Fa-la-la ! Ho-ho-ho !

They rave and they run
Through kitchen and hall,
And "catch the thief !"
Is the cry of them all.

CHORUS.

With a ran-tan-tan ! Chip-chip-chip ! Ho-ho-ho !

But little the chance
Of his Lordship's men,
To catch the thief
Who the jewel hath ta'en.

CHORUS.

With a hush-hush-hush ! Che-che-che ! Ho-ho-ho !

[*The ADDER'S MAGIC STONE is seen floating
in the air, borne by invisible hands, to-
wards GAMUL'S Cottage, through the door
of which it vanishes.*

For he's out and away
On invisible feet,
And the jewel rests safe
In old Gamul's retreat.

CHORUS.

With a ha-ha-ha ! Ha-ha-ha ! Ho-ho-ho !

QUEEN (*speaks.*)

Whist ! Here comes Gaffer Gamul old,
Staggering 'neath his load of gold.
Cease your laughter until he
The Magic Stone returned shall see.

Then, and after,
Let your laughter—
Fairy laughter—
Wake the Jackdaw on the tree.

Enter GAMUL, carrying the bag of gold.

GAMUL (*soliloquising.*)

If gold doth press as heavily upon the soul as on the shoulders, then methinks its possession may prove a burden hard to bear.

Poverty I knew. He hath been my hearth-companion for many a year, and almost I had learnt to love him.

Wealth came, and he hath shouldered out my meagre guest and eke my bedfellow! His face is strange and unfamiliar, and I fear his artful ways.

Live with him alone I dare not! Come then, Benevolence, be thou my right hand—my mentor and friend!

[Opens the Cottage door and enters, but immediately reappears with an expression of fear and surprise.]

The Adder's Stone returned! Is it a dream
With which I wrestle? Is that dazzling gleam

Of living light which strikes my waking sense
But the remembrance of the weird magnificence—
The peerless beauty of the jewel rare
That now adorns his Lordship's hall ?

[*The FAIRIES chant in low monotonous
cadence, GAMUL listening.*

For scarce Peru's deep caverns hold
Its worth in glittering yellow gold.
Nor boots it when, or where, or how,
If e'er the Stone to barter thou
Through want or wisdom art inclined,
Unless its value thou shalt find,
Though bound by lock, or chest, or chain,
It shall return to thee again !

GAMUL.

The air
Is rife with murmurous sounds, and memory
Recalls the Serpent's words addressed to me.
*Nor boots it when, or where, or how,
If e'er the Stone to barter thou
Through want or wisdom art inclined,
Unless its value thou shalt find,
Though bound by lock, or chest, or chain,
It shall return to thee again.*

Wretch and ingrate ! that e'er for hoarded gold
I that exchanged which neither bought nor sold
Might take or give possession. To ensure
Its permanent bestowal, gold may not allure ;
For only as a gift may it remain
His Lordship's. Therefore, Stone and gold again
I will return straightway.

[He enters the Cottage.]

FAIRIES (*singing.*)

All in vain
To reckon gold of equal worth
With that which neither sea, nor earth,
Nor air, hath nurtured into birth.
 'Tis vain ! 'Tis vain !
The gift which gratitude bestows,
An all uncounted value knows ;
Its estimate in paltry gain
 Is vain ! Is vain !

[Curtain.]

SCENE III.—*The Marble Hall in the Mansion of the*
LORD OF THE MANOR—PRINCE, VIZIER, DUKE,
EARLS, LORDS, KNIGHTS, *and other distinguished*
guests, and OLD GAMUL, discovered.

LORD OF THE MANOR.

Again, and yet once more, I bid you welcome !
My Prince, my noble friends, my guests, this day,
Who thus have honoured me by grateful presence
My poor board to grace, and feast your eyes
Upon the richer treat ye have beheld
In the rare jewel, which, with one accord,
Ye have acclaimed as peerless of its kind.

THE COMPANY.

It hath no equal, search where'er we may—
By darkest night, or eke by brightest day !

LORD OF THE MANOR.

The story of its presence ye have heard
Rehearsed. And passing strange and wonderful
It all appears. The gratitude that marks
The humbler creatures, well might serve as theme.
For proudest pen—for poet's noblest dream.

PRINCE.

My Lord, my noble friends, each, all,
I crave a word. Our honoured host,

Whose welcome fair and hospitality
We prize, hath made us debtors ; we would fain
Our pleasure signify by act appropriate
To the occasion. So, it is our will
That Gamul at our hands knighthood receive,
And, honoured thus, the ranks of honour grace.

THE COMPANY.

A Princely declaration ! Gamul, kneel !

*(GAMUL comes forward, and sinks on one
knee before the PRINCE, who touches him
with his sword.)*

PRINCE.

Rise, Sir Gamul !

SIR GAMUL *(rising.)*

Thou, my Royal Prince,
The fount of honour art ; and may the stream
That issues from thy gracious hands, imbue
Thy subject Knight with knighthood's worthiness !

PRINCE.

A knightly speech and prayer !

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THE COMPANY.

So say we all !

LORD OF THE MANOR.

And now, my guests, the day wears on apace,
Whilst much of entertainment still remains
To occupy the fleeting hours, and yield
Pleasant adventure, or romantic quest,
As suits each varied taste. The forest depths
Have much of interest. The library
Will more attractive prove for studious minds ;
And antiquarian wits may best explore
The ancients' marks that mark this wide domain.
To thee, my Prince, I offer the delight
Attendant on the chase. To hunt the stag
Is royal sport. We follow—thou shalt lead !

PRINCE.

Than that the chase affords, no keener joy.
We lead ! Who follows ?

THE COMPANY.

I, and I, and I !

[*Exeunt OMNES.*

SCENE IV.—*The Wedding of JOCKEY and JENNY—
Village Festivities—Youths and Maidens and the
Elders of the Village—amongst them SIR GAMUL.
The Village Ale House.*

WEDDING CHORUS (*sung by Villagers.*)

The slaves of love that wedlock binds,
Are willing slaves : and by this token
No slaves they be, whilst Old Time finds
The silken cords of love unbroken.

He that would fain
'Scape love's sweet pain,
Had best remain
A careless rover ;
For Cupid's darts,
And bleeding hearts,
Are true love's signs the wide world over.

O, love in youth !
The bud a blowing.
O, love in prime !
Fragrance bestowing.
O, love in age !
Still warm and glowing.
By sweet showers nurtured from above,
An everlasting flower is love !

SIR GAMUL.

The Village Queen this day is crowned indeed,
Of that we all are witnesses. The swain
Who claims the Bride deserves the prize,
For worthy he. A bumper now we fill.

(They fill a bumper.)

I give the toast—'Tis Jockey and his Bride!

THE COMPANY.

We drink the toast! To Jockey and his Bride!

(They drink.)

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

If I may be so bold,
The favour I would pray,
That now Sir Gamul sing a song
Upon this nuptial day!

(The Company crowding round SIR GAMUL.)

Sir Gamul, sing we pray,
On this the nuptial day,
We ask it all the more as
We'll join you in the chorus!

SIR GAMUL.

Though it's not writ in the bond,
I most willingly respond.

[*Sings.*

The nuptial knot is tied,
The Bridegroom and the Bride
Are one in twain, and twain in one.
The world is very wide,
But they stand side by side
As one in twain and twain in one,
Whatever may betide.

Chorus. The world is very wide,
But they stand side by side
As one in twain and twain in one,
Whatever may betide.

The Parson did his duty,
And joined are strength and beauty
Now one in twain and twain in one.
The world is very wide,
But they stand side by side
As one in twain and twain in one,
Whatever may betide.

Chorus. The world is very wide,
 But they stand side by side
 As one in twain and twain in one,
 Whatever may betide.

 Who the next Bride will be,
 Is a riddle hard to re,
'Tis one in twain and twain in one.
 But the world is wide and free,
 And a small bird on the tree
Sings one in twain and twain in one,
 And sly though shy is he.

Chorus. The world is wide and free,
 And a small bird on the tree
 Sings one in twain and twain in one,
 And sly though shy is he.

JOCKEY.

Sir Gamul, friends, associates true,
For all the warm good wishes you
So kindly have expressed, we tender
Such thanks as our full hearts may render.

Enter COURIER.

COURIER.

To this bright Company the Manor's Lord
Sends greeting.

The Royal Prince and other noble guests
Who at the castle sojourn, having heard
Of these festivities, would gladly pay
Their devoirs to the Bridegroom and his Bride.
If so be, therefore, no offence is ta'en,
They will arrive anon.

JOCKEY.

They shall be welcome !
Although such guests we scarcely dared to dream
Should grace our wedding feast.

[*Exit* COURIER.]

SIR GAMUL.

Wise Prince is he
That for a season dares unbend, and deigns
By personal contact with the humbler ranks,
To prove the grit of their fidelity.

ANCIENT VILLAGER.

Now, to receive the guests in fashion meet
Let us dispose ourselves. The blushing Bride
And Bridegroom here shall stand. The maidens
fair
And youths will form a crescent in the rear.
The elder dames and men will flank the sides,

And good Sir Gamul will the welcome tell.
Dispose yourselves !

THE COMPANY *range in the order as directed. A fanfare of trumpets announces the arrival of the PRINCE and others.*

[Enter the PRINCE, VIZIER, DUKE, and the rest, accompanied by the LORD OF THE MANOR. The BRIDE and BRIDEGROOM and VILLAGERS bow, as also do the PRINCE and the others.

SIR GAMUL.

My Royal Prince, your Grace, my Lords and Knights:
As mouthpiece of this Village Company,
Who celebrate the marriage of their peers,
The Bride and Bridegroom, in the name of each
And all, we bid you welcome.

THE VILLAGERS.

A welcome to the Prince and all his friends !
Hip ! Hip ! Hurrah ! Hurrah ! Hurrah !

PRINCE.

We thank you all, and deem it honour high
That you receive us of your Company.

Happy the Bridegroom blest with such a Bride !
Happy the Bride such Bridegroom by her side !

.

And now, let not our presence mar the day—
Banish constraint and dull formality—
We would not hinder your festivity.

*(The MUSICIANS begin to play a dance tune
in subdued tones.)*

JOCKEY.

We take you at your gracious word, good Prince,
And, if it pleasure you, my cousin fair
Will stand your partner at the country dance
To which even now the music summons us.

PRINCE.

'Tis a fair offer—not to be refused
By prince or pleb. My Lords, example take !

*[Offering his arm to the maiden. The COM-
PANY choose partners and dance.]*

*[After the dance, PRINCE, VIZIER, LORD OF
THE MANOR, JOCKEY, each with their
Partners, and SIR GAMUL, advance to*

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*the front, the remainder of the COMPANY
in the back-ground.*

PRINCE (*sings.*)

To birth and rank a Prince's smile
Is worth a mint of money,
And should he condescend awhile,
The classes think it funny.
But drat the Prince who always wears
His head as high's a steeple ;
The wiser way *your* Prince prefers—
He mixes with the people !

Chorus. O drat the Prince who always wears
His head as high's a steeple.
The wiser way *our* Prince prefers—
He mixes with the people !

LORD (*sings.*)

I am a Lord of high degree,
With many to attend me ;
But frequently, as now you see,
I hasten to unbend me.
For 'tis the broad foundation strong,
Supports the lofty steeple ;
And dolt is he who deems it wrong
To mix among the people !

Chorus. O 'tis the broad foundation strong,
Supports the lofty steeple ;
And dolt is he who deems it wrong
To mix among the people !

SIR GAMUL (*sings.*)

A hump of pride let others wear,
And emulate the camel ;
Your merry pastimes still I'll share,
Although I am Sir Gamul.
The bird that builds his airy nest
High on the towering steeple,
Descends at times. So, like the rest,
I'll mix among the people !

Chorus. The bird that builds his airy nest
High on the towering steeple,
Descends at times. So, like the rest,
He'll mix among the people !

[*Curtain.*

END OF ACT III.

EPILOGUE.

More would'st thou learn ? Yon mansion high,
That aye attracts the traveller's eye,
Was built by old and wealthy Knight,
His name the good "Sir Gamul " hight.
Nor e'er were turned the homeless poor
Unfriended from the open door ;
Nor pearly tear their cheek bedewed,
Save that of honest gratitude.
Want hath not here a victim found,
For peace and plenty reign around.
O'er many a mead Old Dapple strays,
The comrade of remembered days ;
The Porter dwells within the Grange.
(No more the haunt of dark revenge,)
And o'er the Manor's woodlands wide,
The Keeper's place hath long supplied.

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